

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DJIBOU 00487 051154Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0832

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 0487

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDIP, MOPS DJ US

SUBJECT: HEYERDAHL DECLARATION

REF: DJIBOUTI 478

1. THOR HEYERDAHL INFORMED ME LAST NIGHT THAT HIS DECLARATION
(REFTEL)
WAS TO BE PRINTED TODAY IN PROMINENT SOVIET NEWSPAPERS. THIS MORNING
I HEARD ON VOA THAT ADDIS ABABA RADIO LAST NIGHT MADE ANOTHER STRONG
ATTACK ON ALLEGED JOINT U.S.-U.K.-FRENCH MANEUVERS IN RED SEA. IT IS
CERTAIN THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT PLAY UP THE HEYERDAHL DECLARATION
BECAUSE OF THEIR CONCERN ABOUT MILITARIZATION IN THE HORN OR BECAUSE
THEY INTEND TO SCALE DOWN THEIR OWN ACTIVITIES. GIVEN THE
MALEVOLENCE
OF THE PROPAGANDISTS IN BOTH THE KREMLIN AND ADDIS, IT WILL NOT TAKE
THEM LONG TO TURN THE GENERALIZED HEYERDAHL DECLARATION AGAINST US.

2. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD NOT PERMIT THE SOVIETS TO TAKE
THE PROPAGANDA INITIATIVE IN THIS MATTER. GIVEN THE RIGHT DOSE OF
INSINUATIONS AND HALF-TRUTHS, THEY COULD HAVE EVERYONE IN THIS AREA
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BELIEVING THAT HERERDAHL BURNED HIS BOAT BECAUSE OF FEAR OF U.S.
NAVAL
HARASSMENT. IT IS NOT RPT NOT THE INTENTION OF HEYERDAHL TO SINGLE
ANYONE OUT, LEAST OF ALL THE U.S. THIS IS PURPORTEDLY THE FIRST
POLITICAL ACT HE HAS EVER TAKEN ON ANY OF HIS EXPEDITIONS. IT WOULD
BE
VERY BAD MARK FOR US AND A SHAME FOR HEYERDAHL IF THE SOVIETS

WERE TO ATTEMPT TO DEFORM IT INTO AN ATTACK ON THE U.S. AND OTHER
WESTERN POWERS IN THIS AREA.

3. YOUR JUDGEMENT ON WHETHER THIS MATTER REQUIRES TREATMENT IS
FAR BETTER THAN MINE. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT A BRIEF STATEMENT
AT TODAY'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING INDICATING OUR REGRET THAT HEYERDAHL
ENDED HIS EXPEDITION THE WAY HE DID AND REPEATING OUR ATTACKS ON
SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARIZATION OF THE HORN, MAY PERMIT US TO
MAINTAIN OUR MOMENTUM IN THE LATTER MATTER.

CLARK

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